NATURE AND REVELATION.

AN ADDRESS

BY

THE REV. WILLIAM BLACKWOOD.

AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED AT THE ANNUAL MEETING

OF THE

MISSIONARY, BIBLE, TRACT, AND EDUCATION SOCIETY

OF THE

THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, AT PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY,
APRIL 20, 1852,

ON

NATURE AND REVELATION.

BY THE

REV. WILLIAM BLACKWOOD.

There is no danger of a conflict between reason and revelation, when reason keeps within her own proper sphere, and proceeds aright on the knowledge and observation of her own limits.—DR. CHALMERS. *Lectures on Butler. Posthumous Works*, Vol. IX. p. 52. *London and Edinburgh*, 1849.

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1852.



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CORRESPONDENCE.

PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY,
April 24th, 1852.

REV. W. BLACKWOOD,

Dear Sir—At a meeting of the Missionary, Bible, Tract, and Education Society of Princeton Theological Seminary, it was,

Resolved, 1. That the thanks of this Society be tendered to the Rev. William Blackwood, for his able and eloquent address delivered before the Society at its late annual meeting.

2. That a Committee be appointed to request a copy for publication.

J. HENRY KAUFFMAN,
A. W. SPROULL,
ROBERT WATTS. } *Committee.*

Philadelphia, April 25th, 1852.

To Messrs. J. Henry Kauffman, A. W. Sproull, and Robert Watts.

Gentlemen—I have received your communcation of the 24th inst., relative to the address which I delivered before the Society which you represent, and I hasten to say in reply, that while it was prepared in haste, amid pain and sickness, and certainly without any view to publication, yet I venture to comply with the request that has been made,—under the expectation that the importance of the subject adverted to, may be more thoroughly comprehended by the young friends who were present, when they possess in a permanent form, the brief hints which my limited time enabled me to bring forward.

It would be a melancholy day for the Church, were the time ever to come, when her pastors should have substituted Philosophy for the Gospel. Intellectual Theism never can pacify the conscience, for it has no piacular element. It is this attribute of the heavenly message which invests it with all its power to quiet the soul, inspire with hope, nerve with courage, and stimulate with lofty and becoming motives to action. But in the ordinary pulpit ministrations of the present age, without doubt there has been a sad overlooking of the fact, that Nature and Revelation are both from the same hand: and that Nature, if heard and followed to the limit of her teaching, must lead up to that point at which the moral agent shall be left in terror and alarm, without hope or light, until Revelation dispels the gloom that enshrouds him, and lightens his path by showing that God is propitious.

This is the legitimate use of nature. It will furnish the preacher with apposite and varied illustrations, and aid him in his efforts to shut men up to the necessity of embracing Christ.

I am, Gentlemen, very truly, yours,

WM. BLACKWOOD.

ADDRESS.

Gentlemen—The more professional studies of your academic career, and the inquiries and avocations connected with your membership of this Society, are intended to qualify you for discharging the duties of the most elevated and august function, to which man can be called on earth. They bear on your preparation, so far as preparation can be effected in a school of the prophets, for going forth as ambassadors of the greatest Potentate, charged with the duty of effecting a treaty, more glorious and beneficent in its nature and effects than earthly diplomacy has ever undertaken—to go forth as heralds of the most joyous news that hath ever been proclaimed to the downcast or the miserable, and to cement a peace which has resulted from the most stupendous contest that creation has beheld, and a victory for which creation itself hath been formed. If it be proper that ambassadors should take rank according to the dignity and dominion of the monarchs whom they represent, then who shall sufficiently exalt, or unduly estimate the honours and the responsibilities of that office to which you aspire!

When we walk through classic lands, and gaze upon the mouldering fragments of the faded past—when we stand upon the capitol and look around upon the hoary monuments of the renowned dead—when we walk from hill to hill and pause to meditate on the waning glory and the huge extent of ancient Rome—when we travel to the sunny region of the distant East, and witness the desolation that now reigns where once flowed on the living tide of gorgeous Babylon—when we look upon the Tyrian rock, a drying place for the nets of fishermen, unconsciously fulfilling the sure word of prophecy—when we take our stand amid the graceful columns of Palmyra, or enter the gloom of the massive temples of Luxor or of Thebes—we learn the lesson of man's evanescent sovereignty! But you look for office under Him, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and the blissful sway of whose government shall have no end.

Such being the rank and character of the office to which you

aspire, and so great the results that are dependent on the efficient and successful discharge of its duties, it is of the last importance that your allegiance to your Lord and Master should involve the unreserved surrender of your hearts to him, and ensure the dedication of your lives to his work, as if your desires and aspirations were only realized, when the ends of his administration have been attained. This cannot be the case if your minds have not fully and distinctly apprehended the message of the gospel, that as his ambassadors you are to bear. A man may possess an instrument of rare and wondrous mechanism, with nice adjustments for most useful purposes, enclosed in a casket, the materials of which he can describe in terms most eloquent and scientific, while he may be profoundly ignorant of the use and value of the instrument that lies within. In the hands of such a man the instrument will be comparatively useless. And so it is in relation to the distinctive message that you are to bear. It is the gospel—emphatically the gospel in its simplicity—that is alone intended to achieve the subjugation of the world to Christ. You may go forth from these halls and academic groves to the toils of your career, adorned with trophies from Greece and Rome; you may go to the spheres of your labour furnished with the massive tomes of a Christian literature about the gospel, and bring all your learning to bear on man's intellectual nature; your demonstrations may be most masterly, your positions well chosen, your analysis of character most truthful and pictorial, your appeals most winning and seductive, your denunciations of sin most alarming, and your warnings of the coming woe may fill the soul with terror; your earnestness may attract, and your dilemmas may disconcert; or, when opposition is aroused, you may stand entrenched in evidences, and hurl back the assailant from your impregnable position; you may foil the enemy by the adroitness of your dialectics, and thus silence him in argument; you may feast the intellect, and charm the fancy, and enkindle sentiment, and show that there is much about the gospel that is lofty and ennobling, and deserving man's regard—*all* this may be done, and yet souls may not be saved, nor Christ's gospel message proclaimed, nor the Saviour glorified. Ever bear in mind that it is not to write essays about the gospel in which your mission lies, nor in apologies for the gospel that your strength is to be consumed; but if called and sent of God, then

yours it is, to proclaim for the healing of the nations Christ crucified, the power of God, and the wisdom of God, and to affirm to a guilty world, on the authority of Jehovah, that as surely as they believe on Jesus according to his testimony, they pass out of the category of the guilty and condemned, into the condition of the pardoned and accepted—out of the mass of the corrupt and the dead, into the number of the sons of God, who shall reign with him in life eternal. Every where, and at all times, shall you find that in this message lies the secret of your strength—that as man's most unnatural (and therefore most miserable) estate is that of rebellion against his Creator, so a believed gospel slays this enmity. It fills his soul with joy, it heals his diseases, dispels his fears, ennobles life, suffuses his face with smiles, gilds the future, and sends him on his way rejoicing, because it shows him God propitious, and assures him that his Father has accepted him.

We are all the more anxious and earnest on this point, not only because of its superlative importance, but also because we desire not to be misunderstood in what remains to be said. For while it is indispensable that you should know the distinctive features of the peculiar light that shines in revelation, and which is to be found there alone, it is no less necessary, in its place and for its proper end, that you should discern the traces of God's glory which are inscribed on the works of his hands. We fear that on this point—namely, the relative amount and value of the light which shines from nature and from revelation, there is much confusion in many minds, and that in consequence, many theologians are neglectful of a most powerful agency, by which men may be arrested, and convicted, and left hopeless without a refuge, if they flee not to the provision of the gospel.

God has been very careful to put the precious truth of his Revealed Testimony into a Record, which has been protected by his omnipotent arm. Amid the wreck and ruin of empires, the changes of time, the rise of heresies, the contendings of factions, and the birth and death of dialects and tongues, it has been saved from the fires of the enemy, and the neglect and carelessness of its professed friends; and in its entirety, it still stands forth as the sure index and finger of God, to point out to the Church the unerring way to glory.

Not so has it been with the teachings of God in Nature.

Intended and needed for humanity, world-wide, and in every age, much of that record is connected with God's government of the human family, in their individual and social forms; and here the facts have not been all recorded, and many noted for the time, have fallen into oblivion, from the page of history—or the right deductions have not been drawn from them. Much of that record is also inscribed on the physical world around us. We read it on the lofty mountain and in the wooded dell, on the stormy ocean in its winter fury, and the sleeping lake in its summer loveliness—in the vernal gushing of the budding spring, and the riches of the sere and yellow autumn—in the organic laws, and chemical affinities, and dynamic powers that characterize the works of the Eternal. And here many elements for induction are unknown, and many incidents are transient, and thus the record is not read aright, or the lesson is forgotten, and man again fails to treasure up and classify as wisdom would commend, the intimations which he might acquire, from the manifold and marvellous works of God.

Now, many truths proclaimed in Nature, are likewise taught in the pages of Inspiration, and thus, the two sources of our knowledge, have in this sense much in common. It is by no means strange, therefore, that a certain class of minds, on beholding so many facts, and such fulness of historic and didactic statement, in the Revealed volume, should imperceptibly glide into the belief, that they were taught these exclusively; and that, when there was light and splendour in the one volume to such an extent, there was corresponding darkness in the other.

We affirm then, that while the saving knowledge of God can alone be had from Revelation, yet as much truth, and truth of essential moment in relation to God, his government, and human duty, is obviously treasured up in Nature, it is essential to your mature preparation, that the latter volume should be intelligently read by you, as well as the other; that you should understand them in their reciprocal relations, and see how far they bear the impress of the same hand, that you may know in what direction, and to what distance the one will lead you, and how, when you cannot but follow thus far its guidance, it leaves you helpless, trembling, and afraid; the other, like an angel of mercy, comes in its bright and blessed effulgence, to light your way to peace and glory.

Ignorance here, is usually attended with most disastrous results. If there be not a vivid apprehension of the nature and use of what we have called the *peculiar* light of the gospel—its great, main, central illumination, to which the eyes of the Church are turned to behold life and peace; if there be a misty, indistinct, apprehension of the moral remedy; something from nature and a share of revelation; a little of the law and much about Christ; a blending of the lights that shine from these two sources, the result is, that because of the crossing and intermingling of these rays, there is no distinct vision; or in other words, those who receive and rest on a message thus delivered are not resting on the object of the gospel, and they are not saved.

The other state of moral error, acts as powerfully and as fatally against the interests of truth and righteousness, in an opposite direction, and among a different class of objects. When the teachings of Nature are not fully apprehended in their extent and clearness, and when their legitimate and indispensable uses are not perceived, a disposition is often manifested, to depreciate the information that we derive from this source, in order, as it is imagined, that Revelation may shine forth with more unclouded brightness, because of the surrounding gloom. Such a course of procedure is not merely unwise—it is unphilosophical, and unscriptural. It is adverse to the interests of truth, and has always recoiled with destructive retribution, on the heads of its most thorough paced supporters. The efforts that may be made either directly or indirectly to disparage the light that shines from the works of God with a view to exalt the word of God—or if not exactly efforts—then all such statements, hints and insinuations as point in that direction, raise up a lofty barrier against the acceptance of the gospel by a large class of inquiring minds. Nay, in this connection, the acceptance of the gospel seldom comes in here, to be the subject of debate; it is rather the previous question, of entertaining any system as worthy of regard, which rests any claims to the homage of its supporters, on the undue depression of another volume from the same hand.

Besides, the class of minds who stumble against this impediment, are usually of most difficult management. They are not your men of plastic nature and sluggish temperament, too torpid to awake to the energy of thought and application—men

who seem to wait, in order that society may, without an effort, stamp its own impress upon their minds, and authority, hedge up within the pale of what is customary and conventional—men who are too weak or too timid to look into a higher region than that in which they ordinarily move. Nor are they those more favoured ones, who, under the healthful tutelage of a pious home, have had the truth commended alike to their understandings and their hearts, by the exhibition of the heavenly message in all its clearness, accompanied with the consistent walk, the unwearied beneficence and genial aspect of a godly frame, that adorned the parent, now no more, and which under the Spirit's agency has proved the most unanswerable argument for its celestial origin. On the other hand, they are your men of nervous, stirring minds and bustling intellect—bold, adventurous in their flights, men who will examine and canvass and think for themselves. In their aspirings, they may at times soar into the region of cloud-land and find themselves in darkness; but still they will inquire and collect and analyze and arrange for themselves. It is to such men, that nature ever appeals with a fresh and irresistible potency, and who ever behold it suffused with a blush of joyous beauty. Mainly occupied with objects that are material and sensuous, and ignorant of that spiritual desolation that is experienced by the longing soul, when it feels, that to it no blessedness can come, if it come not with the gifts of a Saviour's mercy:—such men, whether "they scan the sparkling firmament, or dwell on the ruby and sapphire dust of the insect's wing, or thrill as they gaze on some fairy flower, or listen to the ocean's "billowy chime," or to the grim cloud's thunder psalm, or drink in the ravishment of multitudinous joys in the rich music of spring, or hearken to the evening tune of the wilderness bee, and feel it like a hermit's orison,"* on such men's minds the language of depreciation of the lights of science, falls like a sacrilegious utterance. These, whether the mere sentimentalist that searches for the real in the ideal and is sure to never find it; or the dreamer, that would seek the infinite in the finite;. or the enthusiast in nature, whose feelings are strung to the music of those psalms that ascend from rocks and mountains in their lofty majesty, or are heard in the rolling thunder and the roaring water-fall, or whis-

* Introductory Lecture by James Hamilton, D. D. London, Nisbet & Co., 1845. p. 31.

pered in the sighing breezes and the tranquil beauty of the blissful summer eve; or the more stern demonstrative man of science, who will receive nothing as truth, which will not endure the fire of his crucible, or resist the tests of his alembic—all these, because of their habitudes of thought and discipline, are more likely to be captivated by the truths that can be culled from the phenomena of the natural world, than by the dogmata of a system, which, as they believe, is mainly based upon authority. More especially is this the case, if the advocates of that system shall indiscreetly lead them to conceive, that the truths to be adopted, at their suggestion, may be antagonistic to principles, which these men are fully persuaded they have found to be based on evidence in Nature, that cannot be set aside.

These considerations acquire an especial force, when we reflect on the peculiar characteristics of the present age. There never was a period in the world's history richer in the bequests of its predecessors, or more restless in the use of present power, than the period on which your lot is cast. It is an age of scientific opulence. Knowledge is running to and fro with countless accommodations and unprecedented inventions. The sciences are all teeming with so many fresh discoveries, that even those which keep their old names are largely changing their characters. How changed is that most primitive, and in many respects most stupendous of them all—astronomy—from the time that the wise men of the East in the plains of Babylon endeavoured to arrange the order and motions of those orbs that sparkle in the heavens. An instrument of which they never dreamed, has dissolved the galaxies and nebulæ of a later nomenclature, and shown them to be suns and centres of far distant spheres: and still farther, has suggested the thought, that in the immensity of space there may be worlds so distant, that across the vast profound, no ray of light has yet had time to herald their creation! And coming nearer home, what wondrous shapes and forms of things that lived, are now dug from the rocky tablet of this earth's crust? In the language of an elegant writer—"How suddenly have its stones begun to cry aloud, and what unexpected stories of creative wisdom and munificence, antedating the birth of man, have been heard from the sepulchre of worlds which long since ceased to be." Time will not permit us to peep through the microscope of Ehrenberg, and see a new animal kingdom

in a drop of water; nor to hearken to Lagrange, demonstrating the perpetuity of the solar system; nor to look at Dalton, bringing the elementary atoms of each simple substance, under mathematical laws; nor to witness how Franklin, and Volta, and Œrsted can chain the lightning; nor to see what Brewster and Arago have done with light; nor dare we stop, to enter the laboratories of Lavoisier, and Davy, and Farrady, and Liebig, or notice the minerals of Berzelius, and Klaproth, and Jameson, and Thomson; or admire the entomological museums of Kirby, and Burmeister; or with Cuvier and Owen, fit together and supplement the skeletons of a bygone animal economy; or toil with Buckland, and Lyell, and Hitchcock, and Miller, over the broken fragments and strange creations of a primal world; but we hasten on to say, that while every department of knowledge teems with discoveries so simultaneous and so numerous, that it is a task even to register or recollect them, we are surely justified in declaring, that there never was a time when science was so rich, or the mind of man less likely to rest satisfied with present attainments.

Now, here the question presses forward—what have theologians done, and what are they doing in view of this progress? Do they, as a class, stand in the front rank of learning with these votaries of knowledge? Time was, when the theologian stood, at least by the head and shoulders, above all his compeers. We fear however, it is but too true, that the clergy as a class, have on these branches, allowed themselves to linger far behind the requirements of the age. As has been observed by one of the most profound thinkers and graceful writers of these times, "The mighty change which has taken place during the present century, in the direction in which the minds of the first order are operating. though indicated on the face of the country in characters which cannot be mistaken, seems to have too much escaped the notice of our theologians. Speculative theology and the metaphysics, are cognate branches of the same science; and, when, as in the last and the preceding ages, the higher philosophy of the world was metaphysical, the Churches took ready cognizance of the fact, and, in due accordance with the requirements of the time, the battle of the evidences was fought on metaphysical ground. But judging from the preparations made in their colleges and halls, they do not seem now sufficiently aware—though the low thunder of every railway,

and the snort of every steam engine, and the whistle of the wind, amid the wires of every telegraph, serve to publish the fact—that it is in the department of physics, not of metaphysics, that the greater minds of the age are engaged; that the Lockes, Humes, Kants, Berkeleys, Dugald Stewarts, and Thomas Browns, belong to the past; and that the philosophers of the present time, tall enough to be seen all the world over, are the Humboldts, the Aragos, the Agassizes, the Liebigs, the Owens, the Herschels, the Bucklands and the Brewsters."*

We cannot shut our eyes to the fact that a conflict is at hand, and that the battle of the Evidences yet remains to be decided on the field of physical science. Nay, already the voices of the trumpets are resounding, and in this warfare the weapons must be those, which the challengers may please to choose. Confessedly, there is much in science, that divines, if they have not shunned, have neglected. They have dwelt in an upper atmosphere of theological eclecticism and isolation. They have not soiled their gowns by the clays of the Tertiary, nor stained their bands by the filth and dust of the Carboniferous system. They have stood aloof, like affrighted children, lest they should be crunched up by a megatherium of the later Pliocene, or be gobbled down by an ichthyosaurus of the Upper Secondary; and thus the field of Nature has been chiefly left in other hands; in the hands of men, some of whom have been decidedly opposed to Revelation, and others have been ignorant of its value, and both have collected their materials, and arranged their facts, and drawn their conclusions, having had every thing very much their own way. It is no reply to these observations, to tell us that naturalists have not agreed among themselves, and that one theorist, especially in Geology, has only erected a structure to be overthrown by his successor. There is some truth in this, but it is equally true, that out of the debris and fragments of wild extravagance, and visionary hypothesis, and unsound theory, there is arising, in the hands of men of keener sight, and greater caution, and of a wider range of observation, a structure more substantial and enduring, of magnificent proportions and most fair adornment. To the friends of truth it belongs, to see, that in this august and stately fane, there shall no hostile tower be erected, from which, to deal forth missiles

* The Footprints of the Creator, or the Asterolepis of Stromness, by Hugh Miller. London, 1849, pp. 19, 20.

against the temple of revealed truth.* There should be none such; and we rejoice in the belief, that, when the building stands aloft in the glory of its full completeness, there shall be none. We cannot appropriate the terms of an eminent modern writer on the evidences, so far as they describe his own attainments, but we heartily accord with his judgment, where he says—"I have visited the regions of science, studied in her schools, conversed with her philosophers, walked through her avenues and cultivated her fields; I have interrogated the oracles of nature, and solicited a distinct and positive reply to the question, whether the elements of hostility to revealed truth were legitimately contained in them? One and all returned a *negation*, while they responded an amen to Lord Bacon's axiom—'the books of nature and revelation mutually illustrate each other.'"†

Instead of dread and apprehension to the cause of truth, from this quarter, we are persuaded, that a large amount of cogency and power, has been lost to the pulpit, by neglecting the right use of the arguments, that the book of Nature has supplied. And here we cannot illustrate what we mean, better than by simply keeping to the figure of a book or volume.

You have a work put into your hand for perusal, and you are assured, that it merits an attentive examination. Resolved to do it ample justice, you enter on the *first* chapter, and at once you are engrossed by the weighty matters that pass under your review. The subject grows in interest, and just

* Certain divines, aware of their neglect of the Natural Sciences, especially Geology, have contended, that in the controversy with those Geologists whose theories are supposed to oppugn the popular idea of the cosmogony of the sacred Scriptures, nothing more is required than an acquaintance with the common laws of evidence, and a knowledge of the distinction between divine and human testimony. They have ridiculed the idea of men being at pains to understand such subjects, by a previous acquaintance with collateral branches, arguing that it would be as reasonable to maintain, that a man should be learned in surgery and morbid anatomy, before he would be qualified to say that a leg of mutton was tainted, and should be sent from the table—or, that a countryman is unfit for the jury box, because he is not intimately read in the Law Reports or Coke upon Littleton. To this, it has been happily replied by Dr. J. P. Smith—"Upon the first comparison, I make no remark, for its propriety is equal to its elegance; but to invest the second with any semblance of analogy, he ought to have made his 'countryman' *very ill informed* upon the facts connected with the cause which he was called to try, *yet imagining himself to know all about it, and determined to shut his ears against the evidence.*"—(The relation between the Holy Scriptures and some parts of Geological Science, by John Pye Smith, D. D. Lecture I. p. 7. Philadelphia, 1850.) It is ordinarily believed now-a-days, that an acquaintance with mathematics is requisite to a thorough understanding of the reasonings of Astronomers. How any man can conclude that the logic of the Geologists can be satisfactorily examined without a comprehensive induction of facts and a competent knowledge of the cognate branches of Natural History, is passing strange! Yet there are such men.

† The Truth of Revelation demonstrated by an appeal to existing monuments, sculptures, gems, coins, and medals, by John Murray, F. A. S., F. L. S., F. G. S. London, 1840, second edition, Preface p. xix. This very learned and interesting work well deserves to be republished in this country.

after curiosity was aroused, and expectation has been awakened, and suspense is becoming painful—lo! you find that a leaf is torn out, and the chapter is unfinished. Disappointed, restless and unsatisfied, you know not what to do. With troubled spirit, again you cast your eyes upon the book, and find yourself ere long, deep in the contents of the *second* chapter. You are gratified to find, that it bears to some extent, on the previous one, but the mystery is left in darkness, and you find, that the new subject is as engrossing as the one which went before. What increases your interest, is the fact, that the statements bear upon your own position and destiny; and again, when you are approaching an explanation, you find to your dismay, another leaf torn out, and there is no bound to your vexation and confusion. Your annoyance would not have been so great, had you not perceived your own name on the page, and flushed and somewhat nervous, you glance at the *third* chapter. Aye—your name is evidently there, and in a new connexion, and to your astonishment, the intelligence, though on a different point, is quite as absorbing as that which had preceded it; and you are carried onward, to find, that another leaf is gone; and so to your dismay, it is, with *every chapter* in the volume. THAT IS THE BOOK OF NATURE! All these warnings and injunctions have just sufficed, to show you, that there is real cause for much disquietude; but when you are thoroughly alarmed, and feel that the danger may be nigh, when your fears are quickened and apprehension is settling down into deep distress, and the murky clouds of the night are fast closing in upon your soul—FORWARD—in the effulgence of light, the angel of mercy approaches, and as the darkness flees away, and flowers of bright and brilliant beauty spring up around her lightsome footsteps—out, from the revelation in her hand, she furnishes the leaves that the other volume wanted! With wistful eyes, and swelling bosom, you drink in the gladsome pages, and feast upon the words of peace, and promises of safety, and assurances that all is well; and the spirit now relieved, and filled with bliss, finds utterance in doxologies of praise! Yes! it is Revelation that supplies the wanting leaves, and makes all things plain. There is no antagonism—all is harmony; but it is thus only, that much in nature can be read at all, for otherwise it is a puzzle and a mystery.*

* "The gospel, is the fulfilment of all hopes—the perfection of all philosophy—the interpreter of

Take, by way of exposition, the proofs that you find in Nature, of the existence of a great first cause and Governor of all. That there is a system in operation, whereby the materials and organized bodies of Nature retain their forms and mutual relations, and accomplish results according to an imposed law, is very obvious. Whatever the conditions of existence be, in which the bodies of Nature exist and operate, these conditions must have been imposed—imposed by intelligence, and for a contemplated end, otherwise there are existences in operation without a cause. The principle commends itself to the reason of men, that intelligence in the cause may be inferred, from the appearances of it in the effect; and, although atheists have at times disputed the position, that in Nature there are evidences of design, the controversy shows, that they are only deceiving themselves by a new application of terms, or falling back on a more general principle, which contains the very truth they combat; while in life, they invariably act on the truthfulness of this position. As then, intelligence in the effect, implies intelligence in the cause, and as Nature abounds with evidences of design, the conclusion follows, that the works of Nature are the effects of a wise and intelligent cause. But the question remains, does unity of idea in the plan, and unity of action in the use of instruments to carry it forward into operation, necessarily infer unity as to a designing cause? Instances on all sides suggest themselves, of objects, which are the product of combined skill, and of complicated arrangements, for the attainment, by a lengthened series of actions, of a proposed end, manifesting unison in the conception, and unison in operation; and we doubt—while it is unquestionable, that causation appears in Nature—that the evidences of unity of design (apart and by themselves) will fail to lead us up to the unity of the great first cause. But there are other considerations, connected with our ideas of a Creator, which lead us nearer perhaps to the settlement of this question. If ever there had been a time, when nothing existed, then nothing ever could have existed; therefore as things exist, something must have from all eternity existed; and thus we arrive at the idea of an eternal, necessarily existing Being, and in whom, by parity of rea-

all revolutions—the key to all the seeming contradictions in the physical and moral world. It is life. It is immorality. Since I have known the Saviour, every thing is clear; with him there is nothing I cannot solve."—*Müller quoted by D'Aubigné.*

soning, there must be every excellence included. Here then, we are provided in such a Being, with adequate ability, for the creation and government of an infinitude of worlds. There is, therefore, no need for the existence of a plurality of causative agents, to create and govern the universe; and if there be no need, and no positive evidence that they do exist, it is unphilosophical to infer the being of more than one adequate cause. Besides, our conceptions of an underived and necessarily existing being, exclude the idea of participation. Participation would involve either equality of perfections and excellence, or inferiority: but inferiority is incompatible with infinite excellence, and the terms of the case demand it; while, if there were two beings, equal in dignity, wisdom, and power—and the supposition is antagonistic to our idea of underived existence, as the cause of the world's being—though there could not be opposition in their views, because of their mutual perfections, yet, their action must depend on concert, and dependence on each other, is contrary to our ideas of an uncreated, independent, sovereign ruler, whose will is the supreme law. If then, these arguments conduct us to the belief, that there is but ONE author of nature, omniscient, omnipotent, and the author of all perfections; how then does it come to pass that in the world which he has made, and his hands govern, moral evil exists at all? Did nature lead the ancients, legitimately to believe, that there were two principles, a *good* God and a *bad* God, that were leaders on the stage of this world's theatre? And why, if the beneficent and the good be supreme, has moral evil a place in this universe at all? Much can be said about the uses to be made of moral evil, now that it exists, and how to avoid it, and even to derive advantage from it; but nevertheless, in vain you look to nature, to solve this problem—clouds and darkness, thick and palpable, hang around it.

Revelation, however, comes to our relief, and denying nothing that Nature teaches, it confirms our speculations as to the unity of the great first cause, and says that we are right in believing that there is ONE GOD, and there is none other but HE; that the Lord our God is one Lord, and, that by the things which are made, are clearly discerned the eternal power and Godhead of the Maker. Mark xii. 32, 29: Rom. i. 20. So does it likewise teach us, that as it was consistent with his perfections, to create free agents, who, being free, are

capable of falling, yet if they err, the guilt is all their own, and there is no impeachment of creative skill. And farther still, this arrangement in the Divine economy, which at first sight, would lead men rashly to imagine, that with God there was want of wisdom, or might or goodness, has served to elicit more amazing displays of wisdom, and to evolve more wondrous manifestations of divine perfections, in revealing and bringing into play, a new phase of the character of the Eternal, than creation had previously displayed: while, out of the darkness and desolation of man's hopes, and the depths of his misery and despair, the power of Jehovah has been glorified, in lifting him to a life of light and blessedness—in which he dwells in love, and is crowned with joy—to an inheritance of everlasting fulness, for it is the fruition of God, and where, in beatific vision, he shall, throughout eternity, realize more and more of the perfections of Him who hath brought him thither.

Then again, consider the moral government which is established in the world, and it is obvious, that to a great degree, virtue is rewarded, and vice is punished. The intemperate, the profligate, and other transgressors, meet with judgment in the direct operation of the laws of the universe; while, in the smiles of a commending world, and the peace of an approving conscience, and the recompense of honest industry, the virtuous and upright have their reward. But *here* is a man, and his whole life has been one scene of crying iniquity. In the accumulation of his wealth, he has heeded not the plaint of the broken-hearted widows, nor hearkened to the wail of the foodless orphans that his gainful trade hath made. Iron-hearted and iron-handed, he will get, and hold, though families may be desolate, and hearth-fires be quenched, and the light of joy be for ever banished from homes, that once were brimful of merriment and glee. Deliberately and knowingly, he does that in trade, which defrauds and injures others, but yet, of which no human law takes cognizance; and by and bye, the man takes his stand among the sons of wealth and luxury, and settles down into his comfortable home, with all the appliances of ease and costly elegance, where he spends the tranquil evening of his day, and whence a long train of sable mourners, shall follow his remains, to a magnificent tomb! And just beside him, lies another, who by little nibbling acts of secret fraud,

and sly achievements of more wholesale peculation, and successful swindles, had also stepped into the high places of the land, and left behind him sons and daughters, who fare sumptuously every day, and are clothed in purple. How is this? If the rule of government be that evil is punished—that the guilty should suffer and the oppressed go free—how is it that in the administrations of Omnipotence, these, and other such exceptions or departures from apparent justice, can be found? Keeping your eye fixed on this chapter, there is much to puzzle.* How is it, that to such classes of transgressors, there is such countenance displayed? Is it patience only, or forbearance—and shall the time ever come, when the whole long-standing, black account, shall be balanced, and the oppressor meet with his reward? Take these cases in their isolation, and there is much in Nature that is cloudy or imperfect, but near at hand, there are lights shining, that help to guide us on our way. Turn we then another leaf in the volume of this same Book of Nature, and what do we see?

We have not time or space to adduce in order the lengthened train of analogies that Nature furnishes, as indications of our immortality. The train of argument is no doubt familiar to your minds, as elaborated on the profound and acutely reasoned pages of the Analogy, by Butler, a work of which Dr. Chalmers was accustomed to say, that if all the revenues of the See of Durham, from its foundation till the days of Butler, had been expended on the production of that one volume, it would have been a profitable investment. Take, however, the fact, that we see changes in the states of living creatures around us, to all appearance quite as strange as death, and yet their being is prolonged. We exist before and after birth under circumstances totally dissimilar. We can part with portions of our bodies, and lose member after member, until mere shreds and patches of humanity remain, and yet feel that we are still the same. If then, the argument from analogy contain all but the force of demonstra-

* A favourite mode of argument on the part of sceptics, and lukewarm professors, who desire to find an apology for unbelief, is to point to apparent contradictions in the Divine government, and thence deduce the most unwarrantable conclusions. Or one truth will be set in opposition to another, apparently antagonistic truth, under the expectation that by some mysterious algebraic process the one will neutralize the other, or it is thus inferred that nothing certain can be discovered on these abstruse questions. For a masterly examination and refutation of this mode of reasoning, see "The Way of Life," Chap. III., Sec. II. p. 85, by the Rev. Dr. Hodge. A more lucid and profoundly philosophical reply to this species of cavilling, is not to be found in the English language.

tion, how important its bearing on the latter subject we have been considering. We have seen a career of vice closed in death, and yet in life there hath been no adequate retribution. Does not then, every analogy and every argument that hints at immortality, likewise warn of judgment? In courts of law, men are not tried for acts about to be committed. Before a case can be sent to any jury, "the issue," in legal phrase, "must have accrued." And so, the issues of life—*all the issues*, have accrued in presence of a Ruler and a Judge, with whom there is no forgetfulness, and to whom one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as a day. To him the time of man is but an handbreadth, and his life is but a vapour, and he can wait and settle all at judgment. In the words of the Psalmist, in relation to the wicked—"The Lord shall laugh at him, for he seeth that his day is coming." Ps. xxxvii. 13.

But there is more on this subject, even in Nature, to which we shall do well to attend. Man is a creature subject to a law. The light of conscience shows him an essential difference between virtue and vice, good actions and bad actions, and hence the emotions of conscience. Men did not wait, until the philosophers of the olden world had settled the knotty questions then raised, as to the essential principle of moral virtue. They went on blaming or approving, as the emotions of conscience were stirred up in their bosoms; and just so it is all the world over. In more modern times, Hobbes and Cumberland, Cudworth and Clark have disputed; and later still, Butler and Hutcheson, Berkeley and Hume, Price and Hartley, Tucker, Paley, and others, have differed on the same subject, and its various connexions. According to one writer, virtue lies in *utility*—another, holds by *benevolence*—a third, *love of being in general*—while Paley will tell you that, "virtue consists in doing good to mankind in obedience to the will of God, and for the sake of everlasting happiness." (Paley, Book I., Chap. 7.) Men have not waited until these theories have been harmonized, but in the experience of their own souls, they have realized the feelings of approval or condemnation, according to the character of their actions, and they have applied the same rule to the actions of other men. All men do this, in relation to each other, showing that they feel, that there is a common law by which they ought to live. And even when some men profess scepticism, to get free in their own case, they manifest no

desire that there should be a similar freedom on the part of others.* Thus it appears that men, because of the principles of their nature, refer their conduct to a common law. But a *law* implies a *lawgiver*, and a judge, and judgment, and adequate penalties for the violation of the law. There can be no law if there be no lawgiver; and as good no law, if there be no judge and no judgment. And law, and judge, and judgment, are all useless, if there be no penalty, and no infliction of an adequate retribution for the violation of the law. These terms are correlative. The one implies the existence of the others, and the mention of any one, suggests and involves the whole. Here then, Nature shows us that we are launched into the sphere of being, in an economy where there is law, and an index pointing to judgment. Notwithstanding such abnormal cases, as we have already referred to, it is evident that the Ruler of the universe is on the side of virtue. This is easily shown to be the case; for he must either be neutral, on the side of virtue, or against it. He is not neutral, for then virtue and vice would be indiscriminately rewarded, which is not the case. He is not opposed to virtue, for vice in that case would on the whole have the advantage, which is contrary to the experience and knowledge of men; and therefore the alternative must be true, that the moral Governor of the universe is on the side of virtue, and that this shall, in the solemnities of judgment, be made fully to appear. Now farther—did every violation of rectitude meet with an instantaneous and adequate retribution, there would be no time, no space, for a scene of probation here. For the first transgression, the offender must be carried off to judgment. The economy of this world must, therefore, at once come to an end—or rather, it could not have existed at all; as no time could have been afforded for the exhibition of habits and tendencies on the side of vice or virtue. Our creation, then, under a law, shows that we are formed for judgment—but the administration of this present world shows that judgment does not, and cannot take place here, for, on the principle

* Conscience and its judgments, are facts in the economy of the universe, as much as the Alleghany mountains, the Trade winds, or the Gulf stream. Natural theologians have, however, too often contented themselves, as in the case of Paley, with deducing arguments merely from the evidences of design in the universe, as exhibited in the structure of the human frame, the adaptation of the seasons, &c., while the moral argument, and the length, to which that argument will compel the investigator to go, are too often forgotten, and thus all the power that is inseparable from the *immortal* and the *accountable* is lost.

already adverted to, all the issues must go before the Judge, and life be ended. We have now seen the manner in which our being formed under law, is indicative of judgment; and secondly, the fact that to this end, Nature intimates our immortality, and thirdly, the fact that, from the circumstances of the case, the judgment cannot occur in life;—and here we may add, by way of corollary, that on these principles the afflictions of life can form no part of the penal retribution that is due to sin after judgment. And now, there is only one other consideration that remains behind.

The Creator of the world is before all things, and above all things. In the exercise of infinite wisdom and power, he has made all things; but wisdom cannot act, without a plan, and an object, and when a plan is projected by wisdom accompanied by power, then that plan shall be effected. Is it then in accordance with our ideas of infinite wisdom, to conceive that a scheme so complicated as that of this great universe, should have been constructed—moral agents called into being, whose actions affect the dominion and character of the Creator—agents, whose very being, intimates to them, accountability and judgment, in view of which, they have lived and acted—and yet, that the administration of that all-perfect moral Governor, should be either arrested, by an agency external to himself, or the want of a needful element to secure the end, or neglect on his part to consummate the scheme, so, that to all intelligence he shall at last stand forth, exalted in the glory of wisdom, holiness, righteousness, justice and truth? We apprehend, that there can be but one answer to this question—that it is more in accordance with our ideas of law and goverment, and especially of Divine government, to conclude, that there shall be a settlement of the great amount; and that, as the investigation cannot take place here, and Nature intimates futurity, so man having finished his career, goes hence, to judgment!

And now, comes the question of questions! You, O man, have transgressed the law! Memory, conscience, tell you this. Your sins are innumerable. How then, shall you go to the judgment? You cannot hide from judgment—you are made for it, and shall go to it. As the stream hurries on to the ocean, so time is carrying you forward to the bar; and there, you will have memory and conscience against you—and not even yourself in your favour. We ask you, to look around you, on the

face of Nature—hearken to its revelations, and ponder its warnings, and then answer—Is there any thing in the present scene to assure you, that in the world to come the guilty shall escape deserved doom? You know there is not! To what refuge, then, can you flee? *To the law?* It can only point the way of duty and tell of judgment for transgression, and the judge must lay the penalty on! The lighthouse warns the mariner, and guides him heedful, on his way. But heedless and headstrong, the vessel falls into the danger, and, on rock or quicksand, the work of death is done. Yet all the while, that light shines clear, out over the desolation that is around, and stretches forth no hand, in might or mercy to save! *To amendment?* This does not cancel the past sin, and with that sin, you go to judgment. *To repentance?* Does repentance, or remorse, or agony, or reformation, give back to that miserable man, the wasted patrimony, and wretched wife, now lying on her death bed, and buried children, now lost to him, by his guilty career? No! No! they cannot put him into the category, in which he stood, before he fell. Repentance can no more suffice for past sin, than it can for future sin;* and the law sternly tells you, that every moment has its present duty, and that for every violation of duty, the judge must condemn. So far, you have read in Nature's volume. *You have got to the end of a chapter, and the leaf is torn out*, and you are left in mystery and dismay. And now, what shall you do, while the darkness thickens, and the thunder mutters in the distance, and every incident betokens the solemnities of judgment? Revelation comes to your aid, and tells you that all these things are true; but it adds, that there is hope for the guilty—that a Redeemer has come to save the lost, and that as many as believe on him, shall not perish, but have eternal life. (John iii. 15, 16.)

Having seen that the light and law of Nature, thus used, become a school-master to bring sinners to Christ, we cannot (for want of time) enter on those analogies in Nature, which, *when atonement is revealed*, indicate the sameness of the workmanship in Nature and Grace. Neither can we allude to Geology, further than to say, that whatever the final form shall be, which that science may assume, when a more general collection of data, and a sifting analysis, and strictly logical

* Archbishop Magee on Atonement and Sacrifice. London: Henry H. Bohn, 1849. First Sermon, p. 8, 1st col.

synthesis, shall have arranged it into compact and systematic order—this at least is known by it, that the dreams and visions of worlds growing by development have vanished into air; and whether or not, it shall be finally proven that it is only some six thousand years or so, since God has called the earth and heavens into being, or that ages too great for man's arithmetic, have witnessed the achievements of the Deity, in gradually preparing an abode for man—this much the science has also done, it has also found an unanswerable reply to the scepticism of Hume. In the words of a writer already quoted, alluding to fossils in a sea-cliff, he says: "But what say you to the relics, that stand out, in such bold relief, from the rocks beside us, in their character, as the results of miracle? The perished tribes and races which they represent, all *began* to exist. There is no truth, which science can more conclusively demonstrate, than that they all had a beginning. The infidel, who in this late age of the world, would attempt falling back on the fiction of an 'infinite series' would be laughed to scorn. They all began to be. But how? No true Geologist holds by the development hypothesis;—it has been resigned to sciolists and smatterers;—and there is but one alternative. They began to be, *through the miracle of creation.* From the evidence furnished by these rocks, we are shut down, either to the belief in *miracle*, or to the belief in something else, infinitely harder of reception, and as thoroughly unsupported by testimony, as it is contrary to experience. Hume is at length answered, by the severe truths of the stony science. He was not, according to Job, 'in league with the stones of the field,' and they have risen in irresistible warfare against him, in the Creator's behalf."*

Gentlemen, we hope that your faith is too well founded to fear any of the sciences; and we trust, that your understandings are so enlarged, that you can love, and cultivate, and *use* them all.

* Footprints of the Creator, by Hugh Miller. London, 1849, pp. 277, 278.

THE END.

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